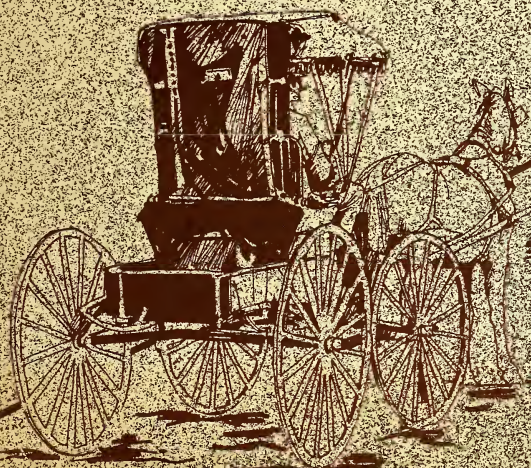


# 100 MILES OF HISTORY

With  
Historian  
DALE ARCHER







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# ONE HUNDRED MILES OF BASIC HISTORY

by Dale Archer

Certainly no tour book would be complete without the inclusion of the two basic factors that are the core of the rich historical heritage of this area. They are the Allen County Museum in Lima, and the Neil Armstrong Air and Space Museum at Wapakoneta.

We call your attention to, and recommend them now, but they are not included in the tour itself because the time needed to thoroughly explore and appreciate each of them could not be compressed into a single days tour of one hundred miles that seeks first to take you to the actual sites that have been written about, and told in news articles, on television, and in over four hundred appearances in our area during the Bi-Centennial Years.

Should this initial effort stimulate enough interest to merit further one day tours, booklets such as this will be offered that will tell the story of Logan County, its beauty and history of the Mac-O-Chee castles and Indians, Simon Kenton, Wyandot County of the Wyandots and the battle of the plains, Crawford and Knight.

The story and site along the Miami Erie Canal, of Fort Miegs, the Johnson story at Piqua, Fort Wayne the fort and three rivers. The Air Force Museum at Dayton. Fort Recovery and Wayne. For here is the center of an area that contains the last chapter of the story that speaks of the conflict with England that began at Concord, Lexington and Bunker Hill.

May the spirit generated by the Bi-Centennial year continue on, that each of us will more fully appreciate the good things our country has done for the betterment of all mankind, I am,

Sincerely,

*Dale Archer*



**ARMSTRONG MUSEUM**  
10:00 - 6:00 Mon. - Sat.  
1:00 - 6:00 Sun. & Holidays



**ALLEN COUNTY MUSEUM**  
Open Daily 1 to 5 except Monday

*Sponsored by*

The First Federal Savings and Loan, Lima and Ada.

## FORWARD

The Bi-Centennial Year has recreated a new awareness in all Americans of what went into the making of a new nation that in less than two centuries became the envy of the world. The emphasis has rightfully been placed upon the birthdate of this new nation and the conflict with the mother country for the possession of the land that lay between the Eastern seacoast and the Appalachian Mountain Range.

Had the conflict with England ended with the close of the Revolutionary War, the United States today might still be confined within those boundaries. But that conflict continued on until the conclusion of the War of 1812 with American armies waging war with British armies supported by the Indian allies that were making a last effort to retain this bit of land between the Great Lakes and the Ohio River. For here was the last bit of forest land left for the major tribes of forest Indians, the Miamis, Shawnees, Wyandots, Delawares and Senecas of the whole Eastern third of a continent they had owned for untold centuries.

It was warfare waged many times by Revolutionary veterans, fighting under the same Generals and the same flag, carrying the same muskets and fighting the same enemy as they had in the beginning. Now the goal was to open the door westward to the Mississippi and add this land between the Mountain range and the Big River to the lands of the eastern seacoast.

And so they came, Harmer, St. Clair, Wayne and Hull finishing here along the banks of the Auglaize, Miami, Scioto and Maumee Rivers, and at Fort Recovery, Fort Mies, and Fort Stephenson, what had begun at Lexington, Concord and Bunker Hill.

But war was no new thing to this Great Lakes country, in the beginning when France claimed this land, Landglade had moved through it to attack British traders at Fort Piciwillany in 1852, and in 1880 British Captain Bird had moved through here to attack American settlements along the Ohio.

Here too lived the last of the brilliant Indian leaders, Blackhoof at Wapakoneta, Tarhe the Crane at Upper Sandusky, The Little Turtle at Fort Wayne, Blue Jacket at Belfontaine, and sleeping with them is Ohio's great frontiersman Simon Kenton at Urbana.

This bit of land where we live is indeed a land of giants, to the above we must add Neil Armstrong, the Wright brothers, Thomas Edison, and John Glenn.

It is hoped that this booklet will in a small way enrich those who have a great pride in America by providing a way to see and come close to those places where sleep, and once upon a time lived, these tremendous men that make this land a land of destiny.

## CHRISTOPHER STARK WOOD "THE FATHER OF LIMA"

Christopher Stark Wood was more than the man that founded the city of Lima in 1831, he was a frontiersman in his own right and a close friend of both Daniel Boone and Simon Kenton.

The Wood family floated down the Ohio River from Maryland and settled at Limestone Kentucky, now Maysville, in 1884 while Mr. Wood was in his early teens. Here he learned the arts of the woodsman and Indian fighter from neighboring Boones, Kentons, Wetzels, Zanes and McCulloughs.

He would apply those skills many times as a scout for the armies of Harmer, St. Clair, Wayne and Hull during the campaigns that were waged in the conquest for the Northwest Territory.

Allan Eckert mentions Mr. Wood in his book the Frontiersman, as accompanying Kenton on Indian raids.

He began government in what is now Allen County, when he was appointed Justice of the Peace by Governor Jeremiah Morrow in 1826. He was one of the first three associate judges of Allen County, and signed the first court records of Allen County Court of Common Pleas, when that first session was held in the James Daniels cabin on the banks of the Ottawa River. In addition to platting the City of Lima he also surveyed a number of first roads in Allen County, and established the first settlement in the County in 1824 on the banks of Sugar Creek north of Lima. He died as the result of a train wreck in Athens, Indiana in 1851 where he is buried.



Lois Brown Sinnett, well known Indiana artist, has presented Mr. Wood in two oils. One late in life portrait hangs in the offices of the First Federal Savings and Loan of Lima, and the second hangs in the Allen County Court House portraying Mr. Wood as a frontiersman in life size. This painting was presented to the Citizens of Allen County by members of the Allen County Bar Assoc., attorneys and government employees, during the Be-Centennial year.



## THE FORT AMANDA TRAIL AND INDIAN VILLAGE SHAWNEE TOWNSHIP

Of all roads and trails hewn through the heavily forested land that is now Allen County, none was more traveled than that called the Fort Amanda Trail, leading from the village of Lima to Old Fort Amanda on the Auglaize River, passing on its way through the very heart of the Shawnee Indian Village in Shawnee Township.

From the 1830's until late in that century the Old Trail was the scene of countless horse and oxen drawn wagons of all descriptions laboring through snow, mud and dust, in the heat of summer and the cold of winter, transporting settlers and those materials needed to transform this last land of the Indians into homes, villages and farms.

In the beginning it was a scene that saddened the heart of the Shawnees living here where the Ottawa begins to flow northward to join the Auglaize. For here was their village, their last Council House, their last home east of the Mississippi, and in 1832 when they were lined up to begin their march to Kansas, they were leaving behind the Council House and seven cabins, and the last forest land of a whole third of a continent that had been their home for untold centuries. From here they marched into oblivion.



By parking in the parking lot of the Shawnee Mall, one stands in the center of the Old Shawnee Village as well as the center of the Hog Creek Shawnee Indian Reservation. The Council House stood directly north about four hundred feet, and Pht's cabin, the last village Chief, stood "several rods north and west of it." Probably not far from the south river bank.

## BREESEWOOD

Built with Bricks made from the clay of the farm.

Griffith Breese was one of the settlers that purchased portions of the last owned Indian lands of the Hog Creek Reservation. In 1832 he built his cabin on the north bank of the Ottawa River near where the Little Ottawa flows into the mother stream. Here he and his family lived until 1840 when he began the construction of a more permanent home built of brick. It would take eight years to finish this home that was among the first to be built in this part of the state and still standing. When it was finished the family could look out the windows and see the old Council House and a number of cabins that had been built by the Shawnees. The Fort Amanda Road was a mere mud trail over which oxen and horse powered Conestoga wagons moved slowly between the village of Lima and Fort Amanda.

The bricks were moulded four at a time from the clay that came from the clay pit near the bank of the little Ottawa, mixed by oxen that trudged in a monotonous circle through the thick red mud. When formed, the bricks were laid out to dry until ready for the kiln, also made from the first bricks formed. At the bottom of the kiln breather holes were left open, and one at the top to form a draft, the bricks were piled within in such a manner that logs of oak, ash and walnut could be piled and fired for many days until the bricks within were thoroughly fired. Mortar was formed by heating limestone into flakes, which when mixed with water from the stream and sand from the same source, created a mortar that still can be seen today in the eighteen inch thick brick walls.

Wooden shakes made the roof, supported by hand hewn native timber that had seasoned in the log through the years of building, the same logs supplied the rafters, beams and trim, doors, windows and floors, many of which still serve their purpose as they did when the Breese family moved in in 1848.



Breesewood presently is the residence of the Donald Montgomery family, and is not open to the public. It is located just west of the Shawnee Road, on Fort Amanda Road, at the top of the hill west of the bridge.



## FORT AMANDA - TAWA TOWN

Built in 1813 by Harrison's troops.

In 1915 a committee formed of citizens from Allen and Auglaize Counties petitioned the State Legislature for \$5000.00 to erect a monument on the site of this old fort that was built during the War of 1812 by Harrison's troops. It was among the last of over fifty forts to be built on this land that lay between the Great Lakes and the Ohio River in wars that were fought for almost half a century to own and control this land that in reality belonged to the red race, for here were gathered the last of the major forest Indians fighting desperately to retain all that remained to them of a whole eastern third of the continent. France claimed it first and fought for it against England, they lost and then it became the prize of a war between England and the new American government. The Indians and England lost the last phase of this warfare, and the destiny of the forest Indians was oblivion.

But there is more to Amanda than the fact that it was a fort in a decisive war. Here were built boats made of wood, hollowed out log Pirogues, planked wooden cargo boats, and rafts that floated supplies to northern forts, Miegs, Defiance and others. In its center was a supply storage house made of logs, and a second story served as a hospital where many wounded were brought and where many died. There was but one casualty at the fort and this was a Captain Dawes shot by an unknown assailant from across the river, while he was picking grapes from a vine that wound its way around and through a great tree.

Here too is buried one of the first American War Veterans, Peter Sunderland, one of the last to leave the redoubt at Bunker Hill. Badly wounded by British bayonets, he hid in the surrounding marsh until rescued by American patriots, and then like many other veterans of that war crossed the mountains and settled here.



The reproduction of Fort Amanda used here is from the original oil by Lois Brown Sinnett, which along with three others hang in the offices of the First Federal Savings and Loan in Lima.



## SIBBELL DRESSBACK THE INDIAN WOMAN DOCTOR

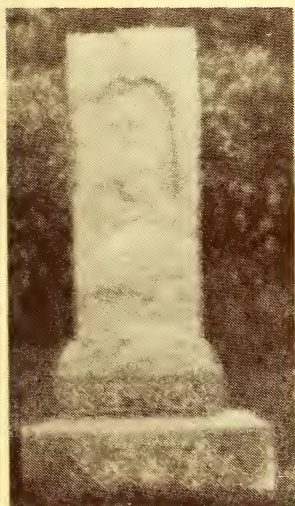
Sibbell Dressback was an Indian woman doctor who administered to the needs, wants, and illnesses of many of the early settlers of the canal boat era. At an unknown date she married a white man, a Doctor Levi Dressback, and between the two fulfilled the needs of a still young bit of country that could be traveled only on horseback or on foot. Whether she was Shawnee, Wyandot, or Miami no one knows. It is only known that she was both liked and respected, and many times her Indian medicines were preferred to those of her Doctor husband.

But when Sibbell Dressback died in 1882 she was a foreigner in her native land, and a controversy arose as to where she would be buried. There are two stories concerning this dispute, one that she did not wish to be buried in the white cemetery along with her white neighbors. And the other is that her white neighbors did not want this Indian woman buried along side of their people, despite the fact that she undoubtedly had doctored many of them in times of illness.

The debate was settled when the founder of the tile mile, beside which the cemetery is located, granted a bit of land to one side of the cemetery where this lady could be laid to rest. And so it was done, and here today is the only known Indian grave, excepting that of Wapakontaugh in Wapakoneta, that remains of a race of people that once inhabited this entire continent. The poignant marker reads as follows:

"I stand at the door and knock"

Close by (see map) is Deepcut  
Plaque tells this story



This memorial stands at the edge of the cemetery that adjoins the Sandkuhl Tile Company in Kossuth, Ohio.

## THE SETTLEMENT MUSEUM

This is a private enterprise inaugurated by Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Dietz of R.R. 3, Wapakoneta, Ohio in 1968. Ardent students of history they decided early in their marriage that a fulfilling hobby would be the construction of a log cabin village, portraying life as it was lived here in the beginning.

Hundreds of miles and many months later a number of acceptable log cabins were found and purchased, each was dismantled and moved to the Dietz Farm where they are being reconstructed exactly as they were found, all are authentic and the origin known, five are completed and two more are under construction, authentically furnished with period furniture, one roams down dirt pathways to a smoke house, barn and blacksmith shop as well as a museum and antique shop. Early implements surround you, and a knowledgeable guide is there to answer questions.

There is no admission, and they are open each day of the week, excepting Mondays. Sundays the hours are from 1 to 5. Both Tour groups and individuals are welcomed.



Located 2 miles west of Wapakoneta on CR 33A, and five miles west of the Neil Armstrong Air and Space Museum on I-75. Take SR. 33 off I-75 west to Moulton Exit.



## AUGLAIZE RIVER WAPAKONETA

Here is the southernmost point of the Auglaize River. Its source is north and east of Wapakoneta in the Scioto Marsh area near Westminster. Here for a space of perhaps three miles it flows almost directly west then turns north to join the Maumee River at Defiance.

By standing at the rear of the Murphy Store, on the public river bank parking lot one is thrilled to realize that he is standing on the site of the old Mill, built by the government for the use of the Shawnee Indians, but used by many early settlers, as it was the only mill for many miles around.

Near its base was buried Johnny Logan, a Shawnee Indian, who having his loyalty questioned, during the War of 1812, rode north with three companions to bring back prisoners for questioning. Near Defiance he was mortally wounded in a fight with Indians loyal to the British and brought back to Wapakoneta where he died and was buried with military honors. He was the only Indian ever so honored.

On the north side of the main street and close by stood the last principle Council House of the Shawnees, presided over by Blackhoof, and at times, in the early days, by his warrior chief Blue Jacket. Here came, at times, many of the last of the valiant warrior chiefs to council with Blackhoof, among them Tarhe, Buckengelas, Little Turtle and Tecumpseh. General Harrison visited here many times, as did John Johnson, the Indian agent from Piqua.

Here too came British Captain Richard Bird in 1780 with his Regulars, and Canadian Rangers with Indian Warriors, making an army of almost fifteen hundred men. Here they disembarked to portage to "a point near Piqua, where they reembarked to attack American Settlers along the Ohio River," and were chased back north, towards Detroit, by Boone, Kenton and other Frontiersmen from Kentucky.

In 1752 French Lieutenant Charles Langlade came this way to attack Fort Pikawillinay at Piqua. Few sites in Ohio have contributed more to our rich historical heritage than has this bit of land along the Auglaize.



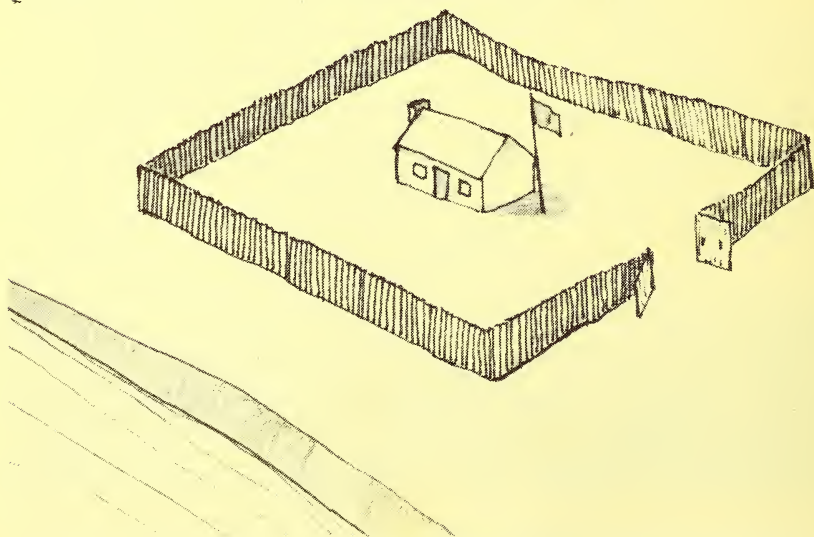
Parking is available along the river in the center of downtown Wapakoneta. Best entry is from the Blackhoof Bridge on Blackhoof Street.

## FORT AUGLAIZE

It began here. The first white men to come into this part of the continent, to live, and make their living were the legendary Courer Des Bois, French traders and trappers who built a small trading post on this spot in 1748. Later in 1752, when a number of British traders established a trading post at Pickawillinay, near Piqua, the post was enclosed with a palisade and called Fort Auglaize, the first of many forts that would be built on the Auglaize River.

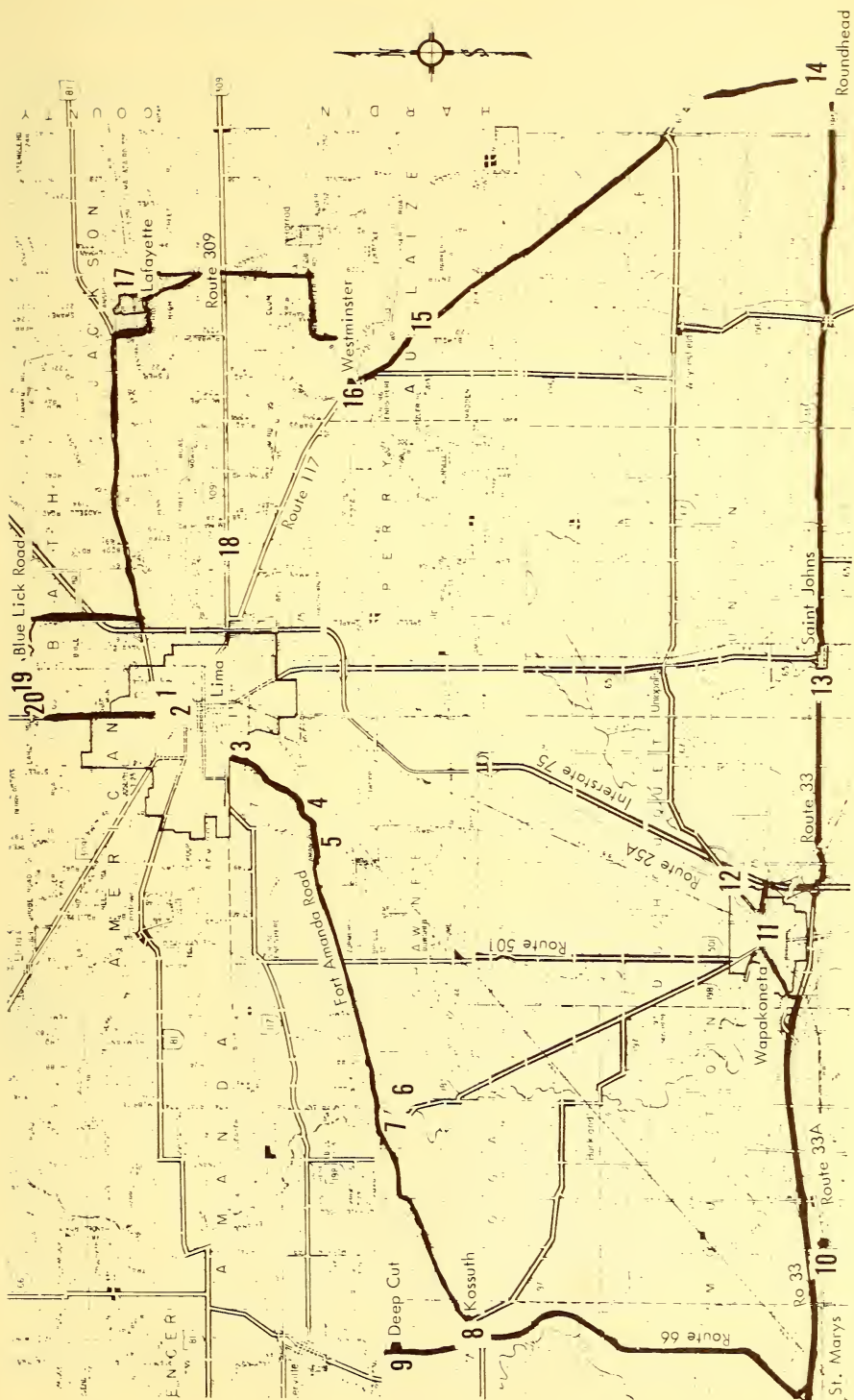
Not much is recorded about these wild forest men who roamed throughout this bit of the continent in the beginning, except they were able to live for months in the depths of the forest, obtaining from it their food, clothing and shelter. They adopted the Indian way of life, marrying Indian women quite often, and producing offspring with names of Francois Duchquet, and Pierre Lorami, and many others.

The Wapakoneta band was undoubtedly one of those whose headquarters were in Quebec and who probed southward down the mainstreams and tributaries that lead into the very heart of the Indian hunting and trapping area of this part of Ohio. This post was a rendezvous or central gathering post for the individual trader that fanned out in different directions by pirogue, or light canoe, following the smaller streams to their very source and returning with peltrie which he secured by trading trinkets for furs. When a sufficient amount of furs had accumulated here to fill a larger Batteaux or cargo boat, they were then floated northward by way of the Auglaize to the Maumee, across the lakes to Quebec.



This site is directly across the river north of the parking lot of the Veterans of Foreign Wars on old Route SR. 25, one mile east of Wapakoneta. Permission to park on the VFW parking lot has been granted by the Post.





## CATAHECASSA OR BLACKHOOF

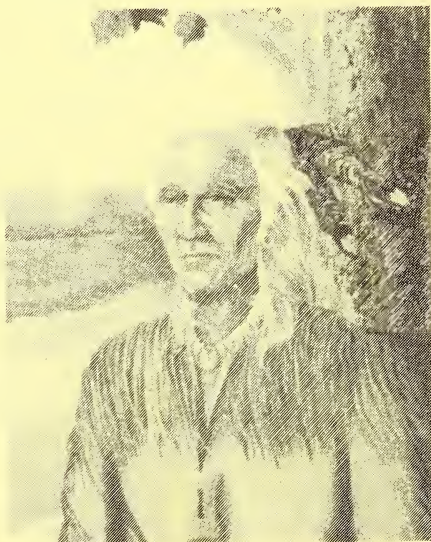
No other individual played a more significant or consistent part in the Indian Wars than did the man called Blackhoof, last of the great Shawnee principle chiefs and their last warrior Chief.

Blackhoof began his career as a warrior at the battle of Fort Pitt in 1755, when Indian warriors joined the French to defeat General Braddock's army near Pittsburgh. Not only was this army completely defeated but Braddock was killed and carried from the field of battle by an aide named George Washington.

From that time on until the battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794 Black was a participant in every battle between whites and Indians including many forays along the Ohio River to discourage white settlers who were streaming down this waterway to settle in Ohio and Kentucky.

Not only was he valiant in battle, but his honor was unquestioned, he was as compassionate as he was courageous, and denounced the burning at the stake and the slaying of women and children. He had but one wife with whom he lived for forty years, reluctantly he signed the Treaty of Greenville in 1795, and never again did he raise his hand in battle against the white man. During the War of 1812 he opposed Tecumseh's plan to mass all Indian warriors together and push every white man, woman or child back across the eastern range of mountains. This was a major factor in denying sufficient soldiers for the success of the Tecumseh plan.

He lived to be one hundred and nine years old and died in his village at Saint Johns in 1831, the year before his people were marched west to Kansas.



A memorial park in honor of this man is erected on land given by Mr. Rogers, located at the edge of the cemetery near which or in, this chief is believed to have been buried. At the intersection of SR 33 and SR 65.



## THE DEVILS BACKBONE ROADSIDE PARK

In the beginning when Ward bought the land upon which the Devils Backbone is located, he bought acres and acres of valuable timber, a great deal of gravel, which would be used to pike the mud roads, and a hill about which he is supposed to have said, "its Hell on teams, and like climbing up the Devils Backbone." The name stuck and today it is still called the Devils Backbone.

Wards timber established a logging industry which flourished for almost a century. The logs were moved to the mills on mud boats or sleds in the winter and heavy log wagons in the summer, over what was then the Lima Bellfontaine Road, now SR. 117. Not only was the hill a steep and winding climb going up, but was very hazardous going down in the winter, for the roadway became covered with ice and snow, and the heavy sleds had a tendency to slide sideways and roll down the hill taking oxen and horse team with them. This writer's grandfather told of such an incident that happened while he was present. A man by the name of Miller was going down the hill and the heavy sled loaded with logs slipped off the road and down the hill, taking with it the horse team, which was fatally crushed.

With the coming of the automobile, new owners were prone to say that their car could climb the Devils Backbone without shifting into low speed. Such a car was rated very high in motor power.

The hill has been cut away, and the road straightened, and at its peak there is now a roadside park, built and maintained by the State.



Note: No14 is shown on map as Roundheads town, a Wyandot village. There are no markers here, it is included only for information purposes.

The Devils Backbone is located two miles southeast of Westminster on SR. 117. Restrooms and picnic tables, along with excellent drinking water, are available to the public.

## THE ALEXANDER CREPS CABIN WEST MINSTER

In the beginning this was a nation of log cabin homes, one roomed abodes built from the material at hand. They were cramped, drafty in winter, and hot in the summertime, but they were durable. So durable in fact that many still stand, covered with modern siding on the outside and modernized on the interior. They have provided pleasant homes for continuous living for almost two centuries.

One such home is the cabin that was built in 1832 by Alexander Creps, the founder of Westminster. It stood in the beginning on the south bank of the Auglaize River about two hundred feet east of SR. 117. In later years, the exact date unknown, it was moved into the village of Westminster and as time passed it was sided and modernized and is the present home of the Steve Ewing Family. Almost directly across from the Ewing home is a second log cabin also modernized, but its origin is unknown at this time. At the close of the last century it was lived in by a family named Lippincot.

Three of the largest buildings still standing in Westminster are a part of a bygone era. Joe Anderson ran a hotel in what is now the Swaney-Billings Insurance offices, and the pump that supplied water for the horses for both traveling salesmen and logging wagons still stands in front of the old building. Westminster's only grocery still operates, as it did, in the building that once was the Hullibarger General Store. The red building, now an antique store, was for a time the home of Alexander Creps and his wife.



The Creps cabin is not open to the public but stands on the corner of Katrina and Carey streets.

The three other buildings mentioned are located in the center of the town.



## THE CONTRIS HOME AND OLD MILL POND

It is said that at one time Alexander Creps owned over seven thousand acres of the forested land in the Westminster area, some of which he platted off into lots in 1834 and began the village of Westminster, named after his home town of Westminster, Pennsylvania.

He left three sons and one daughter, each of which continued farming on land left them by the parents. On each farm there was built substantial homes that still stand as momentos of the skills and craftsmanship of that early era.

The oldest son, Sylvester, built one of these homes on Faulkner Road, at the east side of the village, and it is now owned by and is the residence of the Donald Contris Family. Built in 1868 it still retains the majestic beauty that speaks of the lasting quality of the Ash, Oak and Walnut timber that went into its making.

Across the road and on the bank of the Auglaize River is the site of the old mill built by David Crall in 1846. Water powered in the beginning, with water rights reaching one mile up river, it was later powered by steam engine, and operated as a grist mill until the close of the last century.

The Contris home and the old mill pond are one of the most beautiful sites in the County. Photographers love it.



Turn east on Faulkner Road, in the center of the village, about one half mile.

Map No. 17 - McKees Hill, difficult to find and inaccessible as to the site. The British agent Alexander McKee lost his hogs here while escaping from Logan forces in 1786, thus Ottawa River was called "Kosko Sepe" or Hog Creek by Indians.

Map No. 18 - Lima Oil Well, on Allen County Fairgrounds, a replica of the oil well of the 80's, and presented to the citizens of Allen County in the Bi-Centennial Year by the MacDonnell Family. Easily seen from SR. 309.

Map No.'s 19 and 20 - Plaques mark the sites of the Boose find and the sites of the Christopher Stark Wood settlement, with the full accounts on each.

